

MANNERS MATTER!

Try four easy ways to teach kids how to behave

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In all parts of their lives, children with great manners have a powerful advantage over those who do not. They make friends easier, get along better with their teachers, and eventually make much better employees and spouses. Here are four techniques that will give your child this life-long gift:

Tip No. 1: Make a list

Sit down with your kids and make a list of the specific behaviors polite people display. Have fun with this activity. Your written list might look something like:

- Say “please” and “thank you”
- Eat with their mouths closed
- Burp in the privacy of their own rooms
- Say “excuse me”
- Hold doors open for people

Tip No. 2: Model these manners

Children learn much more from our actions than from our words.

Tip No. 3: Provide kids what they want only when they use manners

When parents use Love and Logic, they don’t waste their breath lecturing about good manners. Instead, they very politely refuse to provide what their kids want unless they hear a sweet “please” or “thank you” and see the other behaviors on their “manner list.”

For this to work, parents must respond to requests with polite sadness instead of anger or sarcasm. For example, a parent might say in a sad tone of voice, “This is such a bummer. We can’t go to the movies today because you need more practice with manners first.”

A parent who sets this limit, avoids anger or sarcasm, and holds firm by staying home will see a very upset child in the short-term and a much happier, more responsible one in the long-term.

Tip No. 4: Expect them to repay you for any embarrassment they cause

If your child continues to be rude, he or she may need to repay you for the embarrassment or inconvenience created. With genuine empathy and sadness, a parent might say, “How sad! Your rudeness at Aunt Mary’s house really drained the energy out of me. I’ve been too tired to clean the bathrooms. When you get them done, I’m sure I’ll feel a whole lot better.”

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If the child refuses or forgets to do the chore, wise parents don't lecture or threaten. Instead, they quietly allow their child to "pay" for their bad manners with one of their favorite toys.

Thousands of parents have transformed manner monsters into polite kids who are a pleasure to be around. At one Love and Logic seminar, a parent commented, "When I used these tips, my boys almost immediately started to shape up. They even warned one of their rather rude friends who was visiting: 'Better stop burping ... Our mom's gonna make you do chores.'"

Give these Love and Logic tips a try, and see how much fun parenting can be!

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Dr. Charles Fay is a nationally known speaker, parent, and school psychologist with The Love and Logic Institute in Golden, Colo. His video, *Hope for Underachieving Kids*, and his book, *Love and Logic Magic: When Kids Leave You Speechless*, provide a wealth of ideas for raising kids who are ready to learn and ready for the real world. For more information about Love and Logic parenting and teaching techniques, call **1-800-LUV-LOGIC** or visit **www.loveandlogic.com**.